



Public Use on District Lands

**Water Resource Advisory Commission
March 5, 2015**

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Field Operations and Land Management Division**

Public Use Program Background Information

- **Why have public use?**
 - Statute (373.1391) directs WMDs to manage and maintain public lands for recreational use compatible with purpose of lands acquired...
 - District Policy furthers a commitment to plan for public use...



Public Use Program Background Information



■ Lands for Public Use:

- More than 641,000 acres of District lands open for recreation (not including ROWs).
- District's Land Stewardship Section manages recreation on 309,000 acres.
- Agencies / Municipalities under cooperative agreements manage 332,000 acres.



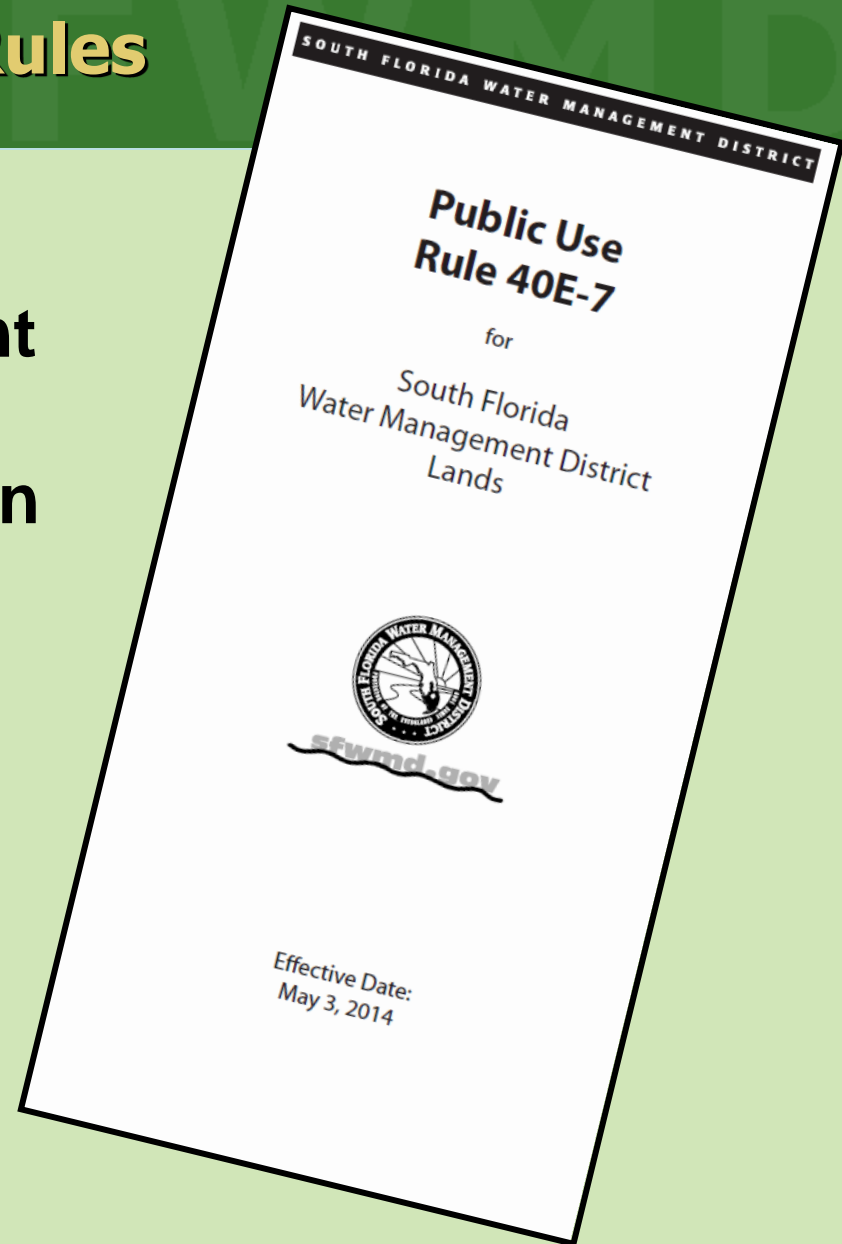
Public Use Program Staffing

- **District's Public Use Program:**
 - **Land Stewardship Section- 31 FTEs**
 - (2.5 FTEs for planning and managing public use)
 - **Coordinate across all District Departments**



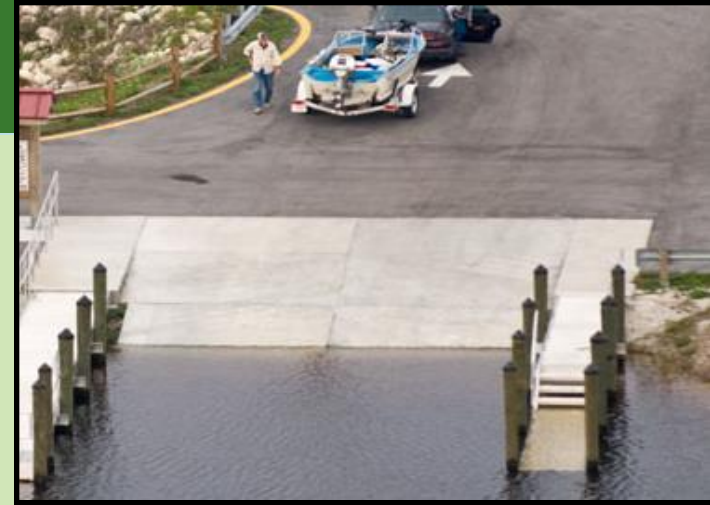
Public Use Program District Public Use Rules

- **Public Use Rule 40E-7**
 - Rules provide commitment for public access and nature-based recreation on District lands consistent with state statutes and District policy.



Public Use Program Facilities on Lands

- District provides / manages:
 - 66 parking / trailheads for public access.
 - 50 designated camping areas, including 2 RV equestrian facilities.
 - Over 330 miles of trails (not including ROWs).
 - 3 major boat ramp facilities.



Public Use Program Types of Land

- **District Lands**
 - Available for a variety of nature-based recreational activities based on type of land.
 - Types of Land include Conservation, Project, Interim, and Right of Way.



Public Use Program Types of Land

➤ Conservation Lands / Management Areas



Public Use Program

Types of Land

➤ Conservation Lands / Management Areas



Hiking trails



Boating



Camping



Youth Camp/
Group Camp



Primitive Camping



Hunting



Auto Trail



Visitor Center



Equestrian Use



Bicycling



Fishing



Canoeing



Kayaking



Picnicking



Wildlife Viewing
Area

Public Use Program Types of Land

- **Conservation Lands / Management Areas**
 - Planning for access and use can include:



Public Use Program Types of Land

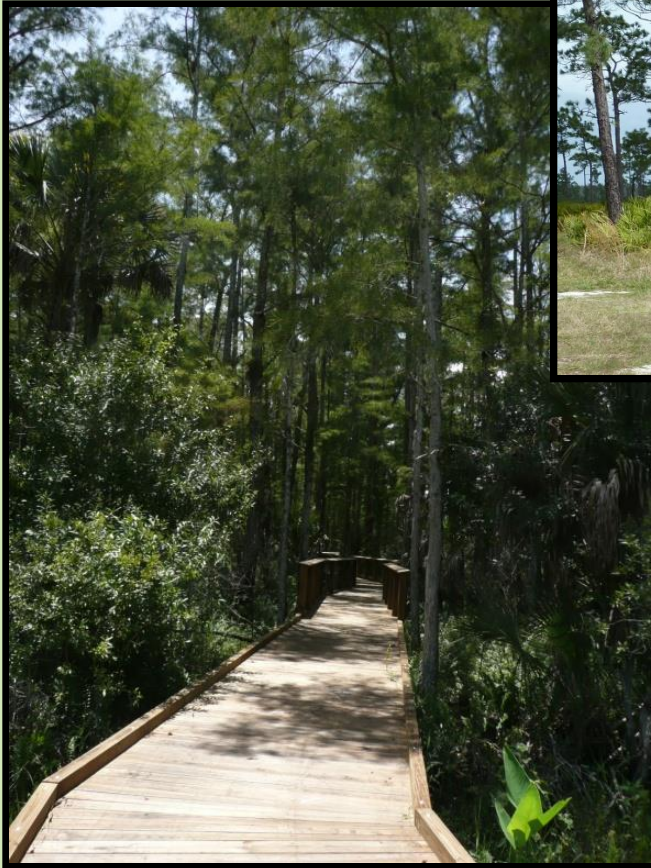
➤ Conservation Lands / Management Areas



Public Use Program

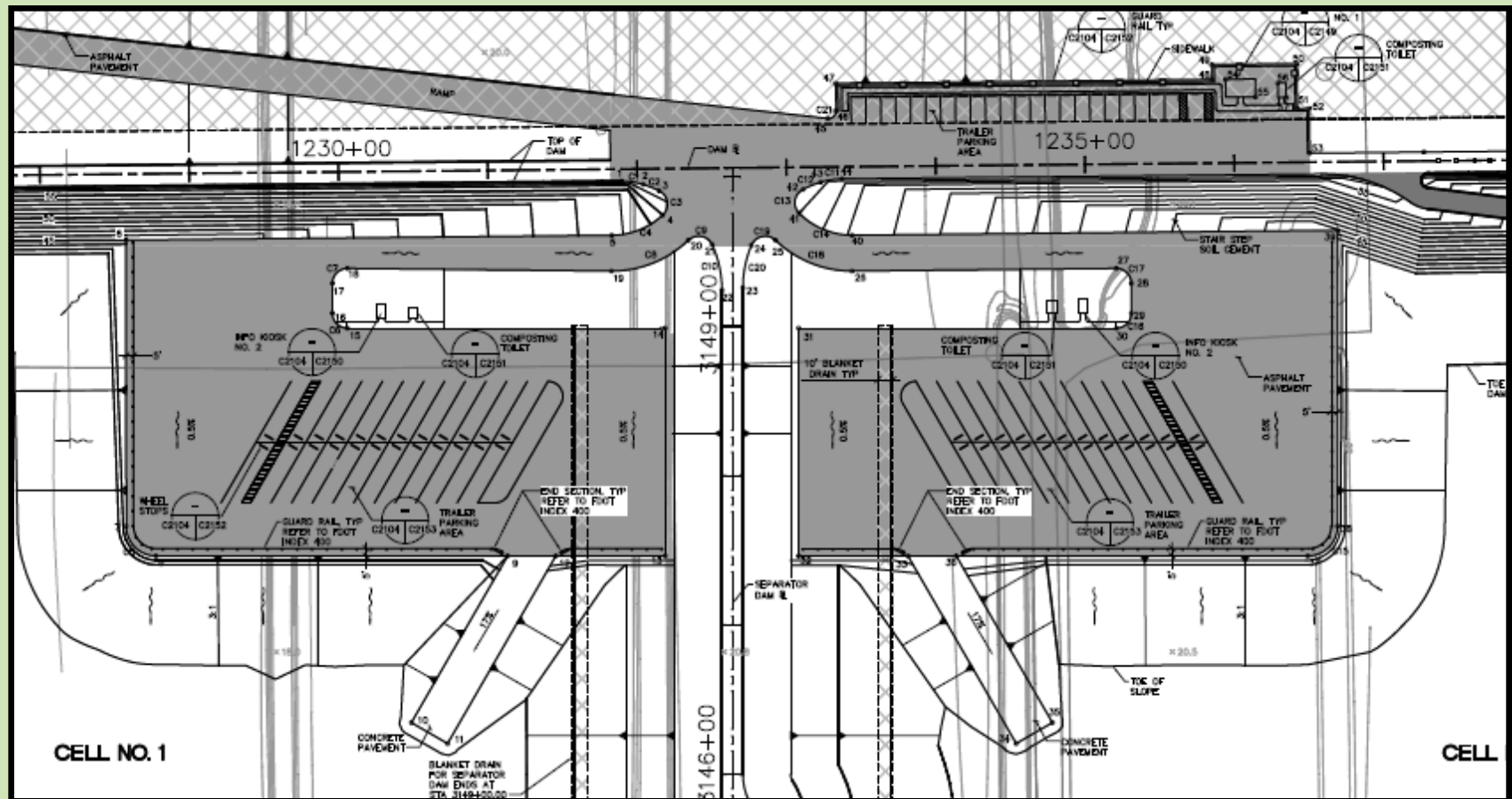
Types of Land

➤ Conservation Lands / Management Areas



Public Use Program Types of Land

- **Project / Constructed Wetlands**
 - Planning and design incorporates public access



Public Use Program Types of Land

➤ Project / Constructed Wetlands



Public Use Program Types of Land

- **Project / Constructed Wetlands**
 - ex. Stormwater Treatment Areas



Public Use Program Types of Land

- **Project / Constructed Wetlands**
 - ex. Stormwater Treatment Areas (public uses and days/times more limited)



Public Use Program Types of Land

- Project / Constructed Wetlands
 - ex. Stormwater Treatment Areas



Public Use Program Types of Land

- **Interim / Vacant Undesignated Lands**
 - Public use on lands planned for future water resource projects.



Public Use Program Types of Land

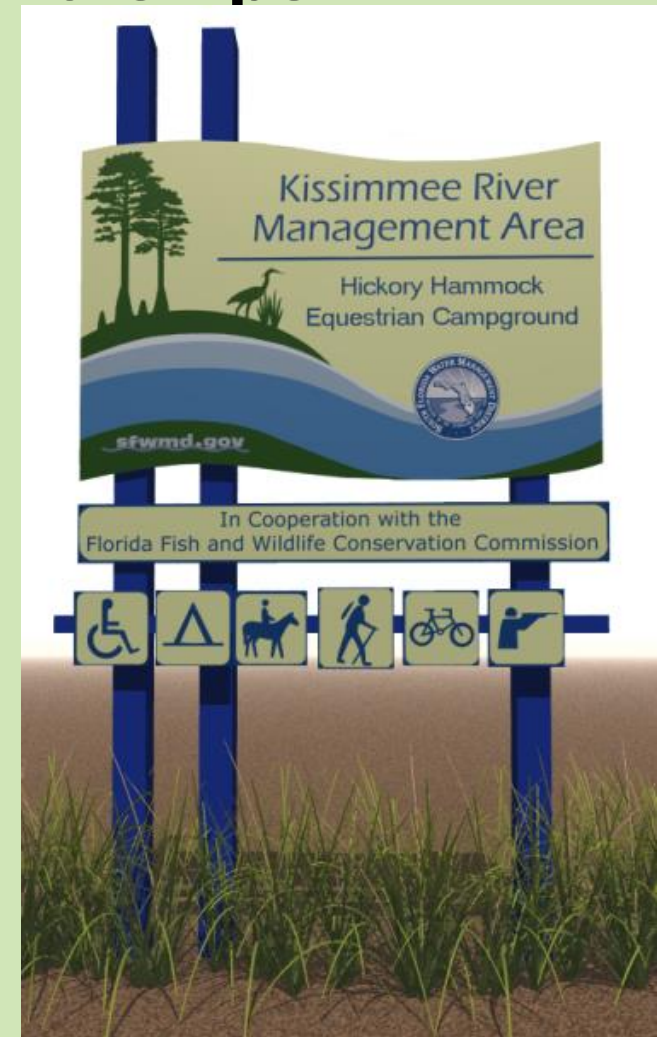
➤ Right of Way (canals and levees)



Public Use Program Partnerships

■ Managing Public Use with Partnerships

- Partnerships with governmental agencies and NGOs to expand opportunities and assist with management.



Public Use Program Lead Partnerships

Six Mile Cypress Slough – Lee County



Public Use Program Partnerships

- **Some Partnerships on District Managed Lands:**
 - **Audubon Society- Cooperative guided bird-watching tours on the STAs.**



Public Use Program Partnerships

■ Audubon Society

- 1st Audubon tour in 2005 at STA 5, now 3 Chapters leading over 65 tours with 1,600+ participants at 3 STAs.



Public Use Program Partnerships

- **Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission**
 - FWC coordinate and manage public use including hunting and rulemaking.
 - Provide enforcement of rules and regulations.



Public Use Program Partnerships

- **FWC Management of Hunting on District Lands**
 - 10 Management Areas.
 - 6 Pubic Small Game Hunting Areas, including 4 STAs.
 - Specialty Hunt Areas.



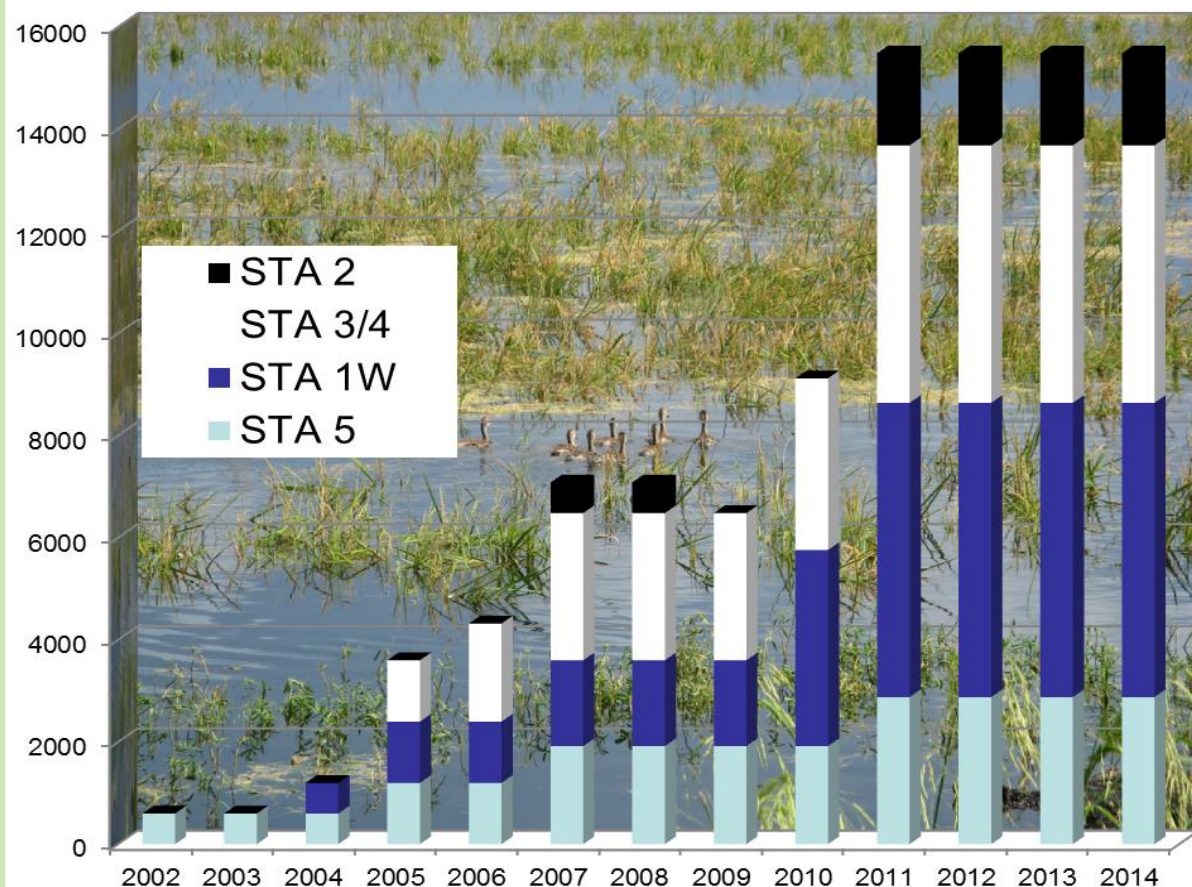
Public Use Program Partnerships

FWC – STAs

- ex. waterfowl hunting



**Annual # of
waterfowl
hunters**



Public Use Program Partnerships

- FWC - STAs



Public Use Program Partnerships

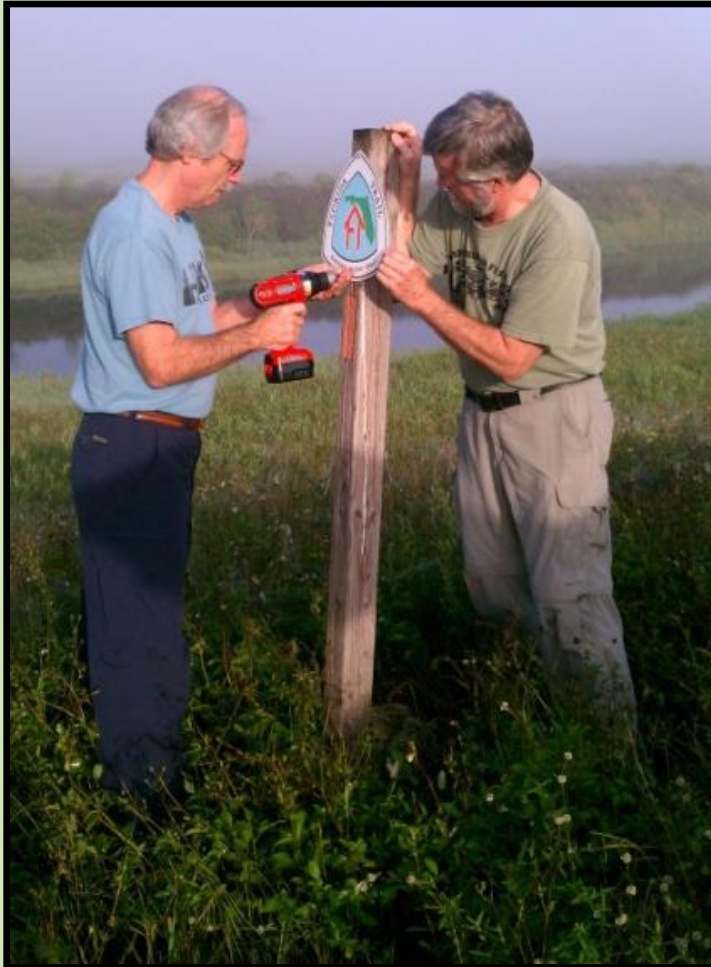
- Wounded Warrior Outdoor program.



Public Use Program Partnerships



■ Florida Trail Association



Public Use Program Partnerships

- Environmental Education
 - CREW Trust
 - FAU - Center For Environmental Studies



Public Use Program Partnerships

- **Municipalities**
 - Assist with maintenance of public use program.
 - ex.-Taylor Creek STA.



Public Use Program Maintenance

- Maintenance of public use program
 - Staff & maintenance contracts



Public Use Program Maintenance

- Maintenance of public use program
 - Department of Corrections (DOC) Crews



Public Use Program Volunteers

- Over 12,600 volunteer hours logged last year.



Public Use Program Information

Public use information:

- Kiosks
- Informational Guides
- Website



Public Use Program Information

Recreation website

- Special Use Licenses (on-line application)
- Last year:
 - Issued over 2,600 SULs for uses such as camping and vehicle access...

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL http://www.sfwmd.gov/portal/page/portal/pg_grp_sul/pg_sul_calendar?site_id=773&activit. The page displays a reservation form for the Micco Landing Tent Campsite. The form includes fields for Site Name, Activity, Arrival Date, and Departure Date, along with a Reserve button. Below the form is a calendar for March 2015 showing the number of spots left for each day.

Site Name: Micco Landing Tent Campsite
Activity: Camping
Arrival Date: March 1, 2015
Departure Date: March 2, 2015

March - 2015

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1 3 left	2 3 left	3 3 left	4 3 left	5 3 left	6 3 left	7 3 left
8 3 left	9 3 left	10 3 left	11 3 left	12 3 left	13 3 left	14 3 left
15 3 left	16 3 left	17 3 left	18 3 left	19 3 left	20 1 left	21 1 left
22 1 left	23 2 left	24 2 left	25 2 left	26 2 left	27 2 left	28 3 left
29 3 left	30 3 left	31 3 left				

The footer of the website includes the SFWMD logo, navigation links (Home, About Us, Residents & Visitors, Business, Scientists & Engineers, Educators & Students), and a tagline "Managing & Protecting Water". It also contains links for Privacy Policy, Disclaimer, Accessibility, Site Map, Logout, Contact Us, and Location.

Public Use Program Special Events

- Coordinated by other organizations on District lands.



Public Use Program Public Participation

- Quarterly WRAC Recreation Issues Workshops
 - Input into future plans and projects.
 - Discuss and resolve issues.



Public Use Program Future Opportunities

- Outlook for potential recreation on District lands...
 - Future Everglades Restoration Projects



Public Use Program Future Opportunities

- Outlook for potential recreation on District lands...
- Completion of Kissimmee River Restoration Project



Public Use Program Future Opportunities

■ Outlook for potential recreation on District lands...

- Last year over 10,000 campers utilized District lands.
- Add additional camping areas, including equestrian camping at Allapattah.



Public Use Program District Accomplishments

- **The District has taken great strides over the last several years to enhance and expand public access and nature based-recreation on its public lands...**
- **The following are some of the areas that have been opened over the last ten years since the implementation of the District's Public Use Policy...**

Shingle Creek – Orange County

- 2,354 acres



Micco Landing – Okeechobee County

- 2,558 acres



Chandler Slough – Okeechobee County

- 3,591 acres



Lake Marion Creek Scrub – Polk County

- 342 acres



STA 1E – Palm Beach County

- 1,114 acres



STA 1W – Palm Beach County

- 6,670 acres



STA 3/4 – Palm Beach County

- 16,772 acres



STA 5 – Hendry County

- 16,508 acres



Cypress Creek – Martin County

- 3,397 acres



Nine Gems – Martin County

- 2,897 acres



Addition to Hungryland – Martin County

- 1,283 acres



Bird Rookery Swamp – Collier County

- 5,617 acres



Allapattah – Martin County

- 21,709 acres



Taylor Creek STA – Okeechobee County

- 193 acres



Kissimmee Chain of Lakes Managed Area – Polk and Osceola Counties

- 21,028 acres



C-23/C-24 – St. Lucie County

- 1,185 acres



Rocky Glades – Miami-Dade County

- 5,143 acres



Grassy Island – Okeechobee County

- 4,782 acres



Istokpoga Floodplain – Highlands County

- 2,047 acres



Hickory Hammock Equestrian Center – Highlands County

- Equestrian campground - additional access to 3,791 acres



Lake Kissimmee Boat Ramp – Polk County

- 136 acre site – access to Lake Kissimmee



S65-D Boat Ramp – Okeechobee County

- 5 acre site - access to the Kissimmee River



Istokpoga Canal Boat Ramp Area – Highlands County

- 18 acre site - access to the Kissimmee River



Thank You

